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From the Private Secretary

SIR ROBIN BUTLER

NORTHERN IRELAND: JOINT DECLARATION

Subject to developments later this evening, we might aim to have a short meeting with the Prime Minister at 0930 tomorrow morning to assess the situation and finalise the line to be taken on the telephone with the Taoiseach. The Prime Minister could then telephone Reynolds before his next appointment at 1015, and before Reynolds has his Cabinet meeting at 11 o'clock.

As agreed with the Prime Minister, I spoke to Archbishop Eames this evening. I described the state of play over the "Irish Convention"/"Forum" point. Eames again endorsed the line we were taking.

Eames phoned back later to say that he had spoken to Mansergh, who would in turn pass his message to the Taoiseach. Eames had argued hard against the reinsertion of paragraphs 10 and 11 of JD14, even with a change of title. He had also supported the qualifications proposed by us to the reference to "Forum for peace and reconciliation" at the end of paragraph 12 (or 10). Eames said that Mansergh had seemed receptive.

Eames also spoke to Mansergh about the bad effect which selective leaking of the document was having on Unionists. He had advised Mansergh that time was not on the side of the Irish Government. He had suggested that it would be a good idea to resolve outstanding points soon, and to go public with the text as quickly as possible, and before Parliament rose.

Mansergh told Eames about the points which Father Magee had recommended for inclusion in paragraph 5. Eames thought they were a helpful addition.

I am sending copies of this minute to Jonathan Stephens, Keith Jagelman and Quentin Thomas (Northern Ireland Office).

Deborah Ailes

PP. RODERIC LYNE
13 December 1993

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